



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Kevin Kerstein
Publicity Manager
Churchill Downs Racetrack
(610) 420-6971 (mobile)
(502) 635-4712 (office)
Kevin.Kerstein@KyDerby.com

SCHERER GETS ULTIMATE SURPRISE AS FAMILY, FRIENDS TRAVEL FROM ACROSS COUNTRY TO CELEBRATE 80TH BIRTHDAY

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Friday, June 28, 2019) – When trainer **Merrill Scherer** attended Friday's races at Churchill Downs, one of the biggest surprises met him when family and friends from across the country surprised the veteran conditioner for an advance celebration of his 80th birthday.

"I can't believe I was swindled in to coming over for this," Merrill joked. "This is unbelievable. I can't believe everyone around the racetrack was able to keep their mouths shut and not tell me. This is a moment I will never forget."

Five of Scherer's sons attended Friday, including fellow trainer **Gary Scherer**, who flew in from Minnesota where he currently is stabled at Canterbury Park.

"The Scherers typically don't see each other more than once a year," said **Clay Scherer**, Merrill's son and Kentucky-based bloodstock agent. "To get everyone together, including a lot of his owners, is very special."

Scherer began his training career in 1962 and has been at it ever since. Scherer has spent the majority of his career based in the Midwest with stints in Illinois, Kentucky and Louisiana. It wasn't until 1993 when he won his first graded stakes race with **Little Bro Lantis** in the Stars and Stripes Handicap (GIII) at Arlington. Since statistics started being regularly kept for horse racing in 1976, Scherer has won 1,410 races with earnings of more than \$24.6 million.

Scherer's sixth son, **Richie**, passed away from kidney cancer in 2017 at age 53. Richie helped his father during the summers as a teenager and was a trainer from 1985 until he passed away.

"We're all missing Richie today," Scherer said. "I know he's up there looking down on us and would have loved to be here for it."

Scherer, born in New Orleans, will celebrate his 80th birthday on July 21.

STAKES TRIO, MANDATORY SINGLE 6 JACKPOT HEADLINE SATURDAY'S CLOSING DAY – Saturday's closing day program at Churchill Downs features a tremendous 12 races including a trio of stakes events – the \$125,000 Bashford Manor (Grade III), \$125,000 Debutante (Listed) and \$120,000-added Kelly's Landing Overnight Stakes.

Along with the stellar 12-race program, Saturday is a mandatory payout for all wagers. Entering Friday's program, there was a massive \$309,368 carryover in the Single 6 Jackpot. Saturday's Single 6 Jackpot, which only costs 20 cents per combination, will cover Races 7-12 starting at approximately 3:50 p.m. The daily six-race sequence, which has a low 15% takeout, has challenged bettors to select the winners of six consecutive races but the Jackpot pool is only paid if there is a single winning ticket. When multiple tickets contain six winners 90% of that day's pool is paid out and 10% is added to the Jackpot carryover.

Gates open Saturday at 11:30 a.m. and first post is 12:45 p.m. Free past performances, courtesy of Brisnet.com for Churchill Downs' program are available here: <https://www.brisnet.com/product/past-performances/FPP>,

Saturday's featured event, the Bashford Manor for 2-year-olds run at six furlongs, showcases a competitive field of nine horses. The Bashford Manor is carded as Race 11 at 5:59 p.m. and free past performances are available here: <http://www.brisnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/BashfordManor19.pdf>.

The Bashford Manor field from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds): **Phantom Boss** (Rafael Bejarano, Jorge Periban, 9-5); **Snell Yeah** (Gabriel Saez, John Ennis, 8-1); **Alec and Arthur** (Tyler Gaffalione, John Hancock, 8-1); **Rookie Salsa** (Angel Suarez, Jeremiah O'Dwyer, 5-1); **Finnick the Fierce** (Abel Lezcano, Rey Hernandez, 30-1); **Silent Malice** (Chris Landeros, Pat Byrne, 20-1); **Jamming Cameron** (Aaron Court, Tommy Short, 30-1); **Verb** (James Graham, Keith Desormeaux, 9-2); **Two Last Words** (Corey Lanerie, Tim Glyshaw, 15-1); and **Rowdy Yates** (Ricardo Santana Jr., Steve Asmussen, 10-1).

In the Bashford Manor's companion race, the \$125,000 Debutante, **Three Chimneys Farm's** impressive maiden winner **Magic Dance** was made the 8-5 morning line favorite as she faces eight rivals in the six-furlong contest.

The Debutante is slated as Race 10 at 5:26 p.m.

Among the competitors to Magic Dance is California-invader **Cholula Lips** for trainer **Mike Harrington**. Cholula Lips, who sports blinkers and a shadow roll, broke her maiden in a 4 1/2-furlong maiden special weight at Santa Anita. This is Harrington's first trip back to Churchill Downs since **Creative Cause** finished fifth in the 2012 Kentucky Derby.

“Well, they didn’t let us win the Derby that year so I figured I shouldn’t come back until I found a good one,” 77-year-old Harrington said. “This filly seems to show some signs of promise. She’s ready to run, that’s for sure. Hopefully she keeps improving and we didn’t see the best of her at Santa Anita.”

The field for the Debutante from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds): **Secretly Wicked** (Chantal Sutherland, John Hancock, 8-1); **Indy Takes Charge** (Chris Landeros, Pat Byrne, 3-1); **Megan Marie** (Corey Lanerie, Jonathan Nance, 10-1); **Street Flyer** (Tyler Baze, James Chapman, 12-1); **My Good Girl** (Carlos Villasana, Marco Castaneda, 10-1); Cholula Lips (Rafael Bejarano, Harrington, 7-2); Magic Dance (Santana, Asmussen, 8-5); **Lady George** (Florent Geroux, Carla Morgan, 10-1); and **Lady Glamour** (James Graham, Larry Demeritte, 15-1).

Free past performances for the Debutante are available here: <http://www.brisnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Debutante19.pdf>.

In the seven-furlong Kelly’s Landing, 5-2 morning line favorite **Warrior’s Club** is expected to scratch in favor of the \$300,000 John A. Nerud (GII) – a Breeders’ Cup “Win and You’re In” event on July 6 at Belmont Park, according to **Churchill Downs Racing Club** liaison **Gary Palmisano**.

The field for the Kelly’s Landing from the rail out (with jockey, trainer and morning line odds): **Uncontested** (Miguel Mena, Tom Amoss, 7-2); **Elusive Mischief** (Chris Landeros, Ian Wilkes, 8-1); Control Stake (Santana, Foley, 10-1); **California Night** (Tyler Gaffalione, Mike Maker, 8-1); **Line Judge** (Corey Lanerie, Peter Miller, 10-1); **Kowboy Karma** (Gabriel Saez, Larry Jones, 8-1); **Petrov** (Jack Gilligan, Ron Moquett, 6-1); ~~**Warrior’s Club** (Jon Court, D. Wayne Lukas, 5-2);~~ and Transatlantic Kiss (Hernandez, Foley, 8-1).

The Kelly’s Landing is Race 8 at 4:22 p.m. Free past performances are available here: <http://www.brisnet.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/KellysLanding19.pdf>

MEET LEADERS – Entering the closing two days of racing at Churchill Downs, trainer **Steve Asmussen** has clinched the leading trainer title for the 38-day Spring Meet while jockey **Corey Lanerie** had a nearly insurmountable lead in the rider standings 38-29 wins over **Miguel Mena**. Asmussen, who shattered his own record for the 38-day meet with 166 starters, held a 27-16 win lead over **Brad Cox** and **Eddie Kenneally**. This will be Asmussen’s record-extending 21st title at Churchill Downs.

In the owner standings, **Brad Kelley’s Calumet Farm** and **Maggi Moss** sat in a tie with six wins a piece. Calumet Farm has four entries across the closing two days of the meet: **Moonster** (Friday, Race 2); **Calabasas** (Saturday, Race 2); **Red Sorrell** (Saturday, Race 3); and **Verb** (Saturday, Race 11).

Moss has one entry Friday (**Sharp Witted** in Race 7).

Ken and **Sarah Ramsey**, who are in third with five wins, have three entries Friday and Saturday: **Artemus Bridge** (Friday, Race 7); **Sandy Lane Kitten** (Saturday, Race 3); and **Battle Station** (Saturday, Race 9).

DOWN THE STRETCH – Jockey **Brian Hernandez Jr.** is one win away from winning 600 career races at Churchill Downs. Hernandez has 16 mounts across the final two days of racing. ... Friday’s fourth race, a six-furlong maiden special weight for 2-year-olds, has consistently produced future graded stakes performers. Last year’s winner was **Tight Ten**, who’d finish second in the Saratoga Special (GII) and Iroquois (GIII) for Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen**. Graded stakes winners who broke their maiden on closing week of the Spring Meet at the same conditions, include 2005 Hopeful Winner (GI) **First Samurai**; 2009 Forego (GI) winner **Pyro**; 2009 Iroquois (GIII) winner **Theskyhasnolimit**; 2010 Sanford (GII) winner **Maybesomaybenot**; 2014 Dominion Day (GIII) winner **Sky Captain**; and 2016 Sanford winner **Bitumen** (GIII). ... The season finale of “**Inside Churchill Downs**” airs Friday at 6 p.m. on ESPN 680/105.7. The one-hour horse racing program features expert jockeys, trainers and handicappers. Those outside the Louisville area can listen live at www.espnlouisville.com.

-END-